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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 4 December 2001 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to draw your attention, as a matter of extreme importance, to the dramatic worsening of the security situation in the past few days in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem.

Last weekend, we were all shocked and dismayed over the deaths of innocent Israeli civilians. The Committee condemns such attacks on civilian population, irrespective of their origin, and considers that they should not be allowed to perpetuate.

At the same time, the Committee wishes to draw your most urgent attention to the continuing brutal and disproportionate suppression by the Israel Defence Forces of Palestinian protests against the Israeli occupation. Over decades, it has become absolutely clear that the international community considers the occupation both illegal and morally unacceptable. This has once again been illustrated by the overwhelming majority of votes cast yesterday in favour of General Assembly resolution 56/36, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". It is also evident that a broad consensus has emerged with respect to the need for the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to establish their independent State.

The Committee remains gravely concerned over Israel's continued reliance on its military might, recurrent incursions of the Israel Defence Forces into Palestinian-controlled areas, expansion of settlements and their infrastructure, demolition of Palestinian houses and other property, extrajudicial assassinations of Palestinian officials and activists, stifling economic blockades of the Palestinian territory, and the angry and frustrated response on the part of the Palestinian people. These policies and actions are bound to undo years of laborious and very complex peace efforts by the parties and the co-sponsors of the peace process.

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To prevent this and the concomitant further escalation of violence and suffering for both peoples from happening, we call upon the parties to refrain from acts of mutual recrimination, violence and counter-violence, and return to the fold of the peace process. For that, both sides will have to implement fully and without delay the Mitchell Committee recommendations and the Tenet understandings. As the parties are likely to continue to experience confidence-related problems, as they have in the past, the assistance of the co-sponsors, the European Union and yourself remains as critical as ever.

Also, as the source of continual tension between the two sides lies in the illegal Israeli occupation, we support the idea of convening another meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in order to look into Israel's compliance with the provisions of international humanitarian law and ways of protecting the Palestinian civilian population. It is also our firm belief that the Security Council, with its primary concern for the maintenance of international peace and security, as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, has a responsibility to engage itself in the matter with a view to preventing any further escalation of the situation and widening of the conflict.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Papa Louis **Fall**
Chairman
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People